Extinction of Wild Buffaloes

737. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that a rare species of wild buffaloes found in Bastar (Madhya Pradesh) is on the verge of extinction: and

(b) if so, the details of the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) Although the wild buffalo in Baster, Madhya Pradesh is an endangered species, it is not on the verge of extinction.

(b) The wild buffalo is included under schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 which gives it full legal protection against hunting and commercial exploitation. The species and its habitat is also protected in the Indravati National Park, Bhairamgarh Sanctuary and Pamed Sanctuary of Baster District in Madhya Pradesh which together have a population of 225 wild buffaloes as per the 1996 census.

[English]

Pak Infiltrators

738. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Army foiled an attempt by Pakistan to subvert the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir by arresting a number of Hizbul Mujahideen hard-core militants and recovering from them huge quantities of arms on the election eve and repulsing a group of Pak-infiltrators; and

(b) if so, the details of any other similar moves by the militants and Pak forces in Jammu and Kashmir during August-September, 1996?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). It is a fact that Pakistan and its protege militant groups made all possible efforts, including attempts to infiltrate armed terrorists into the State, to try and subvert and disrupt the process of the Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir. It is not feasible to pinpoint any particular operation of the Army to foil such designs. Coordinated arrangements and sustained efforts were made by the State Government and all the Security forces and agencies to ensure that such designs are not allowed to succeed. As a result, the Assembly elections in the State were conduct largely peacefully.

During the period August-September, 1996, 265 militants were killed, 164 were arrested and large quantity of weapons including inter-alia, 422 rifles, 184 pistols, 768 grenades and a sizeable quantity of explosives and ammunition were recovered from the militants.

Consumer Protection Courts/Forums

739. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the consumer protection courts/forums have been set up at the State and District levels in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government renders any assistance to the States for setting up consumer protection courts/ forums; and

(d) if so, the amount allocated to Rajasthan so far for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. One State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission at State level and 32 District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forums at District level have been set up in Rajasthan under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

(c) and (d). Central Government does not provide any assistance to the States for setting up of Consumer Courts/Forums. However, Central Government has sanctioned one-time grant to States/UTs to strengthen the infrastructure of the Consumer Courts. Under the scheme an amount of Rs. 1.69 crores has been provided to the State of Rajasthan so far.

Relief to Fishermen

740. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme to provide financial relief to fishermen during the lean months;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total number of fishermen likely to be covered under the scheme; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to cover all marine fishermen under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b). The Saving-cum-Relief component of the Centrally Sponsored National Welfare of Fishermen Scheme, which was introduced during 1991-92, provided financial support to active marine fishermen during [illegible] months in a year when no fishing activity is [illegible] due to monsoon/closed season. The scheme?